

# The Newberry Herald and News.

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## BUNCOED BY ELLERBE

MYSTERY OF THE FLOP OF THE STATE NEWSPAPER TOLD AT LAST.

A Written Pledge—Governor Promised to Favor Local Option in Return for Conservative Support and Violated the Pledge Shamelessly.

(From the State.)

IN RE WM. H. ELLERBE, GOVERNOR.

The nature of this editorial statement is such that it is best made over my signature. It deals with my not as a citizen as well as an editor, and cannot well be written except from the personal standpoint.

In the summer of 1897 a plan for the settlement of the liquor issue in South Carolina was suggested to me by a friend, to whom it had been communicated by a prominent citizen who must for the present remain unknown. Earnest consideration convinced me that it was not only the best solution of the vexing issue but the only one which was attainable. It provided for local option by counties; a choice by ballot of the people of each county between the dispensary, prohibition and high license systems, the elections to be held in all counties on the same day, a day distinct from the democratic primary or general election day, and the settlement reached to be of force for a term of two or four years.

This plan I submitted to several men in politics, among them Frank H. Weston and Col. W. A. Neal. The former at once accepted the plan as practicable and desirable. Colonel Neal had been a warm advocate of the dispensary, but he expressed a willingness to make concessions in the promotion of peace among the people, and, although at first preferring a settlement of his own devising, he presently came to approve this local option measure. We discussed the matter several times in the summer and early fall of 1897 and Messrs. Neal and Weston undertook to do what they could to influence Governor Ellerbe to favor this solution. About this time I first proposed the plan editorially.

It was in the latter part of October, I think, that a conference was held between Senator McLaurin—who had just returned from Mt. Airy, N. C., where he had been recuperating after his physical breakdown during the campaign—Governor Ellerbe, Colonel Neal, Mr. Weston and myself, having for its object the adoption of some common policy in regard to the liquor question which should be urged in the governor's annual message. Various plans were discussed, the local option one, however, meeting with more favor than any others. All of us except Governor Ellerbe were substantially agreed upon it, and after I had explained it fully the governor said that it struck him more favorably than any solution he had heard and asked me to write out for him in detail my views for carrying out the proposal, as he wished to study the matter carefully. With that the conference broke up.

Not long afterward—about fair week, I think—Senator Tillman came to Columbia and visited Governor Ellerbe. He had hardly left the city when the governor, about 10 o'clock at night, telephoned the reporters, summoning them to the executive mansion, and there gave out an interview in which he committed himself absolutely to the maintenance of this dispensary system. I believed at the time that Tillman, by some secret hold he had on the executive, had forced him to do this. For until after the interview had been given out did any of us—McLaurin, Neal, Weston or myself—suspect that he had had such a purpose. We were taken by surprise at this abrupt ending of our project to take the question out of politics and settle it democratically according to the principle of local self government.

Of course this ended our hope of influencing Governor Ellerbe to take the leadership in the matter by proposing in his forthcoming annual

message a fair and rational adjustment of the one issue which remained to divide our people. Being much disappointed at the result, I rather avoided Governor Ellerbe after that.

A day or two before the legislative session closed, however, I received a message from the governor, asking me to call at the executive mansion that night. I did so, and we had a two hours' talk. Governor Ellerbe was obviously much distressed and alarmed at the several defeats he had sustained in the legislature and sought to induce me to pledge him the State's support for renomination. I told him that his dispensary views stood in the way—that I would not and could not support any man committed to the maintenance of that dishonest, tyrannical and abominable system. He pleaded piteously for support, which made the interview extremely unpleasant to me; but I held out, and left him between 10 and 11 o'clock apparently almost broken down.

When I was about to start early last May for Tampa with a view to taking part in the Cuban campaign I left instructions that the State was not to commit itself to any candidate in the primary campaign soon to begin. For it was impossible to tell in advance who would be the competitors and what pledges they might make, and I feared lest the paper should be committed in my absence to a man or a policy inconsistent with its record and my convictions. My belief that the war would be a short one, to be ended in three months, caused me to anticipate a return to Columbia before the primary election.

Returning from Cuba I reached Key West on the night after the first primary, and on my way to Tampa on the Mascotte two days later I read in a Jacksonville paper the figures of that election. It was the first information I had that Mr. Featherstone had been a candidate. My disposition at that time was to support him in the second primary as I preferred prohibition to the dispensary.

I arrived in Columbia on the evening of September 5, but finding myself in almost total ignorance of what had happened in South Carolina and the world since the middle of June and being somewhat "dazed" by a return to civilization, I did not at once resume my editorial work, intending to study up a week or two before attempting it.

On September 7, however, the Spartanburg Herald made an attack on the dispensary system and called on me to join in the fight, and that night I wrote an editorial, which appeared next day in the State, giving my "heartily assent to the propositions so well put by the Spartanburg Herald," but stating that on account of my lack of information as to the campaign, the pledges of the candidates, their platforms and their alliances I would be "compelled, with regret, to be a bystander." In addition to these stated reasons I had two others. (1) Contrary to my instructions an editorial mildly endorsing Governor Ellerbe had been printed in the State during my absence, and it seemed to tie my hands, and (2) I was informed that Mr. Featherstone had pledged himself to general prohibition and nothing but that, a circumstance that made me even more hopeless of the promotion of my local option plan through him than through Governor Ellerbe, because I was sure Mr. Featherstone would do what he said and I was not sure that Governor Ellerbe would.

That afternoon, September 8, when I went to the State office I found a note on my table from the cashier stating that Mr. Weston and Col. Neal had been to the office to see me and, having failed to do so, asked me to be sure to meet them that night at Mr. Weston's bank office. I kept the appointment.

We talked for nearly an hour on indifferent topics. At last Col. Neal said to me, slapping his knee:

"Well, let's come down now to bus-

iness. Nearly every paper in the State is jumping on the governor; he's pretty badly worried and is very anxious for you to help him out. Can't you do it?"

I replied that I had told Governor Ellerbe all along that I would not support him for renomination if he stuck to the dispensary, and he had stuck to it.

Mr. Weston said: "The simple fact of the matter is that the governor feels he is obliged to have the support of The State, and we have asked you here to find out on what conditions you will support him." Without hesitation and on the spur of the moment I replied: "If he will pledge himself to me in writing to urge the legislature to pass a local option law, allowing each county to decide for itself between high license, prohibition and the dispensary, I will support him." This idea had been with me for a year; it had been the object of my effort the previous fall and winter, and it came spontaneously to my lips. I did not stop to consider the price I might have to pay in public misunderstanding of my motives if he should accept my terms.

Mr. Weston looked at Colonel Neal and then said: "I don't think there will be much trouble about that; do you, Colonel?" And Colonel Neal replied, to me: "I think he'll do it easy enough; he's got to do it if you insist."

Mr. Weston then asked me if a verbal assurance would satisfy me. I told him no; there had been too much question about Ellerbe's verbal assurance already; I must have it in black and white for my own protection—but he could tell the governor that I would not show the pledge to anybody unless he failed to observe it, in which case I would. Then Mr. Weston asked: "Would you object to having the letter addressed to me? I am going to Charleston to try and help the governor down there and I would like to be able to show it to some of the politicians." I answered that I would not object to that, but that after he had used it in Charleston I must have the custody of the paper.

The conference broke up with their assurance that they would see the governor next day and bring me his answer.

The next day, Friday, September 9, Mr. Weston came to my room and handed me an envelope bearing the familiar engraved lettering, "State of South Carolina. Executive Chamber, Columbia, S. C., Sept. 8, 1898. CONFIDENTIAL."

Dear Frank:—In reply to your inquiry, will say, I fully concur in your view as to the best solution of the liquor question. After mingling with the people for three months and thorough consideration I have come to the conclusion that the dispensary act should be amended so as to allow each county to settle the liquor question for itself, and have determined to make such recommendation to the next general assembly.

Your friend,

W. H. ELLERBE.

To Mr. W. H. Watson.

All of this except the printed caption and date line was in Governor Ellerbe's handwriting. The date was wrong—one day behind.

It was not as precise a pledge as I would have dictated, but whatever of vagueness there might be in the phrase "allow each county to settle the liquor question for itself" was offset by the initial statement, "I fully concur in your view as to the best solution of the liquor question." I knew, and it was a matter of public knowledge and record, that Mr. Weston's "view" was the same as my own; that he favored county choice between the dispensary, high license and prohibition. While I did not have any confidence in Governor Ellerbe's simple word I did not believe he would dare to incur the obloquy of exposure for violating this pledge, and I thought I had him

fast. As Mr. Weston was going that afternoon to Charleston and wished to use the original to secure votes for the Governor there, I took a copy of the letter, on his promise to hand me the original on his return.

He did return it, and I have kept it in my pocket most of the time since.

I must confess that the governor's prompt compliance with my ultimatum was not altogether gratifying, for I had thought the matter over and concluded that to carry out my part of the agreement would subject me to much criticism and perhaps suspicion of my motives and that I would have to withhold my justification until the legislature met. On this account I half regretted my impulsiveness, which had entailed upon me a severe ordeal. But the thing was done, and I went to work in good faith to carry out my part of the compact, having the satisfaction of feeling that I had acted wholly for the public good. The next day The State contained a editorial urging high license voters to support Ellerbe, and each day until the election the paper did its best for him. If it changed as many as 2,000 votes which would have otherwise gone to Featherstone it is responsible, I regret to say, for his nomination.

I did not see Governor Ellerbe from the time I returned from Cuba until some three weeks after his nomination by the second primary. He had called at my office when I was out and had sent me message asking me to visit him, so I went one day to his office at the State house.

After an exchange of civilities he asked my opinion of the clause in the State constitution permitting the issue of licenses for the sale of liquor saying that according to that clause all liquors sold under high license would have to be bought from the State dispensary. I realized the section and showed that it could bear no such interpretation. He persisted in his claim however, and I realized that he was trying to find a loophole by which to escape the redemption of his pledge. This realization angered me so much that I could hardly trust myself to speak. I paced fuming up and down the executive chamber, and finally told him that I was in no mood to be dillyed with in that fashion; that if he intended to bunco me as several newspapers had predicted he would do he might rest assured that I would publish the pledge and show up the whole affair. Then I started out, but as I had my hand on the door knob he called me back and offered to leave the interpretation of the clause to any lawyer I would select. I proposed Chief Justice McIVER, but he objected. I then suggested Mr. R. W. Shand and Gen. LeRoy F. Youmans, and he chose Mr. Shand and said he would submit the question to him. (Weeks afterward I questioned Mr. Shand, and he told me that the governor had not said a word to him about it.)

The main issue then came up, after some talk, and Governor Ellerbe barefacedly denied that he had made any agreement whatever. (I had his letter in my pocket at the time.) He attempted to unload the whole responsibility on Weston and Neal, saying he had told them when he wrote the letter that he had not changed his views, was still for the dispensary and would make no agreement. Assuming an air of virtuous indignation he said he would send for them and make them set him right. (He never did.) I was so disgusted that I again started to leave, saying I would expose the whole affair and let him settle it with Neal and Weston as he could; but again he begged me to come back, and then leaving his seat and coming to my side, in front of the west window at his right hand, he said: "Don't get mad; let's talk this thing over quietly and see if we can't compromise it." And then he proposed to do precisely what he had promised and what I had expected—to urge the legislature to pass an act permitting each county to choose by ballot between prohibition, high license and the dispensary. It was a lightning change on his part and almost took my breath away.

He went on to say that this was no new thing on his part; that he had held those views before he had written the letter to Weston and had told W. D. Evans of them. Then he added: "But I don't see how I can put through an administration measure carrying out the plan." I answered that that did not matter; that I did not like this "administration measure" idea anyhow, and that I thought in this case it might do as much harm as good. All I expected was that he would do what he had promised to do and leave consequences with the legislature. He said again that he would make these recommendations, and I went away satisfied.

I did not see Gov. Ellerbe again until last Saturday afternoon. On Friday Mr. Weston informed me that the governor had read him that part of his message relating to the liquor question, and that it seemed to him throughout an argument for the retention of the dispensary system, although it did make a brief and bear suggestion as to letting the people of the counties settle the question for themselves. He did not like it. He said I told him that if the message did not come up to promise I would show up Ellerbe ruthlessly. The next day, Saturday, Mr. Weston gave a proof of the liquor section of the message, with an invitation from the governor to call on him at the mansion at 5 o'clock that afternoon. I read the proof and was greatly incensed at what I found in it. My disinclination to see the governor was strong and I was afraid I could not control my temper after this revelation of his duplicity; but as I did not wish to bring Colonel Neal and Mr. Weston into the matter—as I must do if I exposed Ellerbe—I finally determined to keep the appointment.

At 5 o'clock I went to the executive mansion and found the governor conversing with a visitor. When the latter left I told him that I had read his liquor recommendations and was greatly surprised and disappointed; that he had not said what he had pledged himself to say; that he had defeated his half way endorsement of local option by other recommendations of the stronger character. He asked me to specify. I pointed out this paragraph, for one: "It (the dispensary) must be firmly and permanently established or completely done away with." This, I said, clearly meant the establishment of the dispensary on its present basis or its elimination from the whole State—it was adverse to partial elimination under the influence of local option. Then I showed that the context of his recommendation as to local option limited the choice

## Closing Out Sale!

Death of a partner compels the immediate Closing Out of the entire stock in the Flynn's Cash Store AT ONCE to settle up the estate of the dead partner.

**Clothing Sacrificed! Shoes Sacrificed!**  
**..DRY GOODS SACRIFICED..**  
Positively no money refunded during this sale at  
**FLYNN'S CASH STORE.**

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prohibition and the dispensary only, wholly ignoring high license as an alternative. This, I said, was not what he had promised me; if adopted it would defeat the very policy to which I was committed and which I preferred—high license. I went on to say that the whole deliverance was obnoxious to his professions and pledges, and that I quite understood his motive in limiting the choice to prohibition and the dispensary and in imposing special and enormous burdens on prohibition counties—he sought to force the dispensary on the people as the only endurable alternative.

He had made the word of promise to the ear and broken it to the hope, I said. He replied with marvellous effrontery, that he had made no promises, that Frank Weston had not acted properly in concealing from me what he had said, and that he would make him publish his letter. I answered that I would do that; that I proposed to show the public that I at least had acted in good faith. I got up, bade him good evening, and walked out of his sitting room, while he was saying: "You can do as you please."

So this is the end of my hope of doing something through W. H. Ellerbe for a fair and democratic solution of the liquor question. I have made my try and failed, and all the men and papers that have been saying the man was faithless and The State newspaper and Columbia would be buncoed can have their fling at me. I am far from being a buncoed. I can only plead that I thought I had guarded against it by securing his pledge in writing. I believed him quite capable of violating any verbal promise, but I did not think he would be quite so shameless as to invite the production of proofs in his own handwriting that he had lied.

To do him exact justice, I do not believe that Ellerbe has acted spontaneously in this matter, but under dire compulsion; that he has taken what he considers the safest choice between evils. I believe that Senator Tillman holds his written pledge to support the dispensary, in terms more specific than those of his letter to me—or else some paper the publication of which would damn him. Tillman, I am informed, was here last week and week before last; he whipped Ellerbe back to his feet a year ago and it is quite likely that he put his collar on him again the other day.

However that may be, I plead guilty to being cheated. I expected to be lied to, but I did not expect to be brazenly swindled. I did not think that W. H. Ellerbe would adopt the device of sneaking out of an obligation in writing by accusing men who had been almost his only friends of a bad faith toward him and toward me. Messrs. Weston and Neal will doubtless speak for themselves; I have refrained from quoting them as to the statements Governor Ellerbe made to them. My story is too long.

Meanwhile, Mr. Weston is a member of the house of representatives and will doubtless have occasion to state his views on the liquor question; and the other members can consider in connection with the recommendation in the governor's message the following extract from his letter now in my possession:

"Dear Frank: I fully concur in your view as to the best solution of the liquor question."

N. G. GONZALES, ELLERBE'S PROMISE ALSO EXTENDED TO ALDERMAN DUNCAN.

To the Editor of The State.  
I have read your article on Gov. Ellerbe and the liquor question published in the State today and wish to endorse it and add my own testimony in support of the charges of falsehood and deception you make against the governor.

On the Saturday before the last

primary election Gov. Wm. H. Ellerbe called at my store without any solicitation or suggestion on my part. After shaking hands with me and talking about the beautiful day the governor brought up the subject of the primary election to be held the following Tuesday, saying he was glad to hear I was supporting his candidacy. I answered that I was sorry he was misinformed as I had supported Schumpert in the first primary and now I was sitting right on the fence and did not know which side to get down on, as I was not a prohibitionist and I was certainly opposed to this tyrannical monopoly of a dispensary law being shoved down the people's throats without having a word to say about it. The governor replied:

"Well, now, Mr. Duncan, right there is the point that I want to explain to you. Since my canvass all over the State this summer, and intermingling with the people, I have come to the conclusion that local option is what they want, and I intend to recommend it in my message to the legislature and use my personal influence, if I have any, to get the bill passed this winter."

I said: "Well, governor, if you are conscientious in that stand I will pledge you my support and do all I can for you from now until next Tuesday, election day."

We shook hands on it, and he said: "I'm very much obliged to you and I hope you'll do all you can for me, and that we'll be successful next Tuesday."

He then left my store. I went to work from that very minute for Gov. Ellerbe, spreading the information among the local option men who had declared themselves for Featherstone and would have voted for him if the governor had not given this pledge to me. At nightfall there was but one man on the Market block who was not for Ellerbe. On Sunday I wrote five or six letters to my friends in the country, telling them what the governor had promised, and I walked Main street the whole of Sunday afternoon telling of Gov. Ellerbe's pledge to me to the business men and every other voter I met. On election day my friends in the country did all they could for the governor and helped to carry the county for him.

A great many of my friends said afterwards that Gov. Ellerbe would be false to the pledges he made to me, but I thought that a man who held the high office of governor of South Carolina must have some regard for his own word and his reputation. I am now forced to believe that he is utterly without truthfulness or honor, and I therefore wish to add my exposure of his duplicity to that which you have made.

J. W. H. DUNCAN.  
Columbia, S. C., Jan. 11, 1899.

MR. WESTON SUSTAINS WHAT MR. GONZALES SAYS.

Mr. F. H. Weston on being approached yesterday with reference to the mention made of himself in the State's editorial "In Re Wm. H. Ellerbe," said that the statements regarding him in the article were correct. That he would have something further to say in the matter, if deemed necessary, but preferred to wait until he could see a full statement which Gov. Ellerbe has said he is preparing.

As to the use of the letter being "unauthorized," he had only to say now that the letter was written in his presence by Gov. Ellerbe and handed to him to be used by him in the precise manner in which it was used.

To Cure a Cold in One Night  
Take Van Lear's Cold Capsules for La Grippe, Coughs and Colds; 12 doses 25 cents at all drug stores. Guaranteed to cure or money refunded. t&fm

Overcoats cheap at Jamieson's,